

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-10 and 12-20 remain pending in this application after this amendment.

Claims 1, 2, 3 and 12 are in independent form.

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to require a medial bulge in thickness to achieve axially variable resiliency. This change is supported by the specification at page 6, line 13 and page 8 lines 22-25.

Claim 2 has been amended to include all the limitation of its previous parent claim and should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 3 has been allowed.

Claim 9, being dependent on allowable Claim 2 should be in condition for allowance.

New Claims 13-16 derive their language from originally filed claims 5, 7, 8, and 10 and present no new matter. Claims 13-16 are dependent on allowable Claim 2 and should therefore be in condition for allowance.

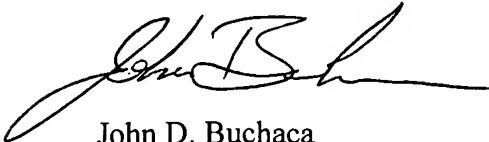
New Claims 17-20 derive their language from originally filed claims 5, 7, 8, and 10 and present no new matter. Claims 17-20 are dependent on amended Claim 12 and should be allowable if Claim 12 is allowable.

35 USC 102 Rejection

Independent Claims 1 and 12 now recite features that are not found in Shim or Lane, namely, the axially variable resiliency derived from the medial bulge. The rejections for lack of novelty are no longer applicable.

In view of the above, an early allowance of all the pending Claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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